

# LETTERS FROM A STOIC

ALL THREE VOLUMES



SENECA



# Letters From a Stoic



**TRUE HAPPINESS COMES FROM MODERATION**

**ENDURE PAIN WITHOUT COMPLAINT**

**LIVE ACCORDING TO NATURE**

**DELAYED GRATIFICATION**

**SELF-DEVELOPMENT**

**PURSUE VIRTUE**



# True Happiness Comes From Moderation



## GOOD HEALTH RESULTS FROM MODERATION

- It is not the man who has too little, it is the man who craves more that is poor.
- Wealth: 1) to have what is necessary 2) to have what is enough.
- One is equal to every day. Nothing in life can be found that is not in a day.
- “He who needs riches least enjoys riches most.” - Epicurus
- No man outdoes you in real nobility. Nobility of the mind is open for all men.

## LIVE SIMPLY

- A fool sees where true happiness lies but does not have the courage to obtain it.
- There are only a few who control themselves and their affairs by a guiding purpose. The rest do not proceed but are merely swept along.
- “They live ill who are always beginning to live.” - Epicurus
- The best ideas are common property. Put value on the things spoken not the speaker.
- Travel is not a cure for discontent. You need a change in your soul rather than just a change of scenery.
- Although you travel vast distances overseas, your faults will still remain with you.
- The person that you are matters more than the place you may go.
- That which you seek, to live well, can be found anywhere.
- No man can obtain a sound mind if he is engrossed in other matters.
- When your time is so scant, what madness is it to learn superfluous things.

# Endure Pain Without Complaint



## DEATH WILL COME

- We are mistaken when we look in the future to death. The majority of death has already passed. Whatever years are behind us are in death's hands.
- No man can have a peaceful life who thinks too much about lengthening it.
- Let us go to our sleep with joy and gladness. Let us say "I have lived. The course which fortune has set for me is finished." And if God should bless us with another day we should welcome it with glad hearts.
- Happiest is the man who can live for tomorrow without apprehensiveness. When he rises he receives a bonus.
- A man has caught the message of wisdom if he can die as free from care as he was at birth.
- Men do not care how nobly they live but only how long. Although it is within the reach of every man to live nobly, but it is within no man's power to live long.
- A man cannot stand prepared for the approach of death if he has just begun to live. We must make it our aim to have lived long enough.
- You do not know where death awaits you, so be ready for it everywhere.
- He who has learned to die has unlearned slavery. He is above and beyond any external power.
- One is braver at the very moment of death than all the time approaching. We do not fear death, we fear the thought of death.
- He who does not wish to die cannot have wished to live. Our life is granted to us with the reservation that it will end.
- Infinitely swift is the flight of time, as seen more clearly for those looking backwards. For when we are in the present do not notice it.
- The good in life does not depend on the length of it but on the use we make of it.





# Live According to Nature



## PERFER TO LACK SUCCESS THAN TO LACK FAITH

- All men should admire the earth but they should understand it also.
- Discuss your problems with nature. She will tell you that she has created both day and night.
- You were born to follow nature. You enhance and increase all that is good in you.
- The soul is God dwelling inside the human body. Rise up and mold thyself to kinship with thy God.
- If reason becomes your ruler you will become ruler over many.
- God is near you, he is with you, he is within you. A Holy Spirit dwells in us and guards us. How we treat it is how it treats us.
- He who is happy takes nature as his teacher.
- Look toward the true good and only rejoice in only that which comes from within your own store.

## PART FROM THE UNATURAL

- The foundation of a sound mind: not to find joy in useless things.
- Never consent your spirit to come under the jurisdiction of things external to ourselves.
- If you live according to nature you will never be poor. If you live according to opinion you will never be rich.
- It does not matter whether you lay a sick man on a bed made of wood or of gold. He takes his sickness everywhere.
- We have reached the pinnacle if we have not placed what we find joy in external things.
- The one thing that can render you truly happy: cast aside and trample underfoot all those things that glitter outwardly.
- Do not seek those men who think of how much they will say rather than how they say it.
- Learning virtue means unlearning vice.

# Delayed Gratification



## EXCELLENCE COMES WITH IMMEDIATE EXECUTION

- Lay hold of today's tasks and you will not need so much to depend on tomorrow's.
- While we are postponing, life speeds by. Nothing is ours except time.
- Time is one gift that even the most gracious recipient cannot repay.
- Each day acquire something that will fortify you against poverty, against death, and against misfortunes.
- It does not matter how great is the flame, but for what it falls upon.
- Man's peace of mind does not depend on fortune.

## PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

- The soul should toughen itself beforehand for occasions of greater stress. When fortune is kind, it should fortify itself for future violence.
- It is foolish to be unhappy now because you may be unhappy at some future point.
- Both hope for that which is utterly just and prepare yourself for that which is utterly unjust.
- No one can live happily who has regards to himself alone. You must live for your neighbor if you must live for yourself.

## SELF-REFLECTION

- Consider not what you hear but what you yourself feel. Take counsel with your feelings and question yourself independently.
- “The fool’s life is empty of gratitude and full of fears.” – Epicurious
- The worse one's soul is, the less he perceives it. Only he who is awake can recount his dreams.
- It is one thing to remember, another to know.



# Self-Development



## WORK FOR LATER GENERATIONS

- Keep on, as you have begun, and make all possible haste so that you may have longer enjoyment of an improved mind - one that is at peace with itself.
- I rejoice that in the fact that if you are persistent in your studies and that, in putting all else aside, you make it your endeavor to each day become a better man.
- Maintain a higher standard of life than that of the multitude.
- Do not spend time in idleness. Appropriate even moments in the night for study.
- If you will be wise, strive to a sound mind at top speed and with your whole strength. If any bond holds you back, untie it or sever it.
- Men who have made discoveries before us are not our masters but our guides.
- Try to perfect yourself in order that you may learn how to love.

## SURROUND YOURSELF WITH VIRTUE

- Withdraw into yourself as far as you can. Associate with those who will make a better man of you. Welcome those who you yourself can improve.
- Happy is the man who can make others better. Not only when he is in their company but also when he is in their thoughts.
- One who can revere another will soon be worthy of reverence himself.
- Have someone according to whom you may regulate your character. You cannot straighten that which is crooked unless you use a ruler.



# Pursue Virtue



## CONTEMPLATE PHILOSOPHY

- The wise man regards all the reasons for his actions.
- No man can live a happy life without the study of wisdom.
- Without philosophy the mind is sickly. Cultivate health of the mind and physical health will follow.
- One must not seek to obtain riches first, but to obtain philosophy.
- Mold thyself to kinship with thy God.
- Wisdom is always desiring the same things and always refusing the same things.
- “At a time that you must evolve most, withdraw into yourself.” - Epicurious
- You must discover yourself in the wrong before you can reform yourself.
- Philosophy enables us to understand things human and divine. This is the greatest good. If you seize this good, you begin to become the associate of the gods and not their subject.
- Good: The knowledge of things. Evil: The lack of knowledge of things.

## PROVE YOUR WORDS BY YOUR DEEDS

- Philosophy teaches us to act not to speak. It exacts of every man that he should live according to his standard, that is life should not be out of harmony of from his words.
- Let wisdom sink into your soul and test your progress not by mere speech and writings, but by decrease of desire.
- The highest proof of wisdom: A man should be equal unto himself under all conditions.
- Happiness derives from within: a good conscious, honorable pursuits, right actions, contempt of the gifts of chance, an even and calm way of living that treads but one path.